

**Mountain Home VA Healthcare System (MHVAHCS)
UTVA Report
December 2015**

Current Budget

1. Significant Budget Fluctuations

- MHVAHCS' goal for their third-party collections was reduced by \$3M for FY 16 due to continuing billing/contract issues.
- MHVAHCS has yet to receive a FY 16 budget so no projection for surplus or deficit has been made.
- MHVAHCS continues to see an increase in Veteran uniques requesting care, while other VISN 9 facilities have seen a decrease.

2. Budget Fluctuations Due to Expenses

- With the implementation of the Choice Act we have seen non-VA care costs increase in order to meet access demands.
- The aging population of our Veterans continues to create additional workload and expense.
- With the current state of the economy, Veterans with private insurance continue to decrease forcing more Veterans to seek VA care with less opportunity for third party billing for the facility.

Wait List (as of 11/30/15)

- Primary Care – 119
- Mental Health Intensive Case management (MHICM) –0
- Home and Community Based Care (HCBC) – 266
- Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) – 68
- Home Treatment Services – 0
- Specialty Care – 1006 (of this number, 573 optometry at Knoxville Outpatient Clinic and 356 are sleep studies, equating to 929 or 92% of the 1006 waiting)

Patient Satisfaction

1. Current Rating

- Mountain Home exceeds overall inpatient satisfaction goals.
- Inpatient Overall Rating – 74.8% (national average – 64.2%).
- Willingness to recommend facility- 80.2% (national average 65.6%).

2. Current Strengths

- Added two Patient Advocate positions in May 2015 at MHVAHCS to assist with Veteran concerns/problems. With the new VA Choice Card program, there is an increased workload due to questions about this program.
- Active Patient Advocacy/Service Partner Program/Service Recovery Program to ensure good customer service.
- MHVAHCS was recognized as a Top Performer on Key Quality Measures: Heart Attack, Heart Failure, Pneumonia and Surgical Care.
- Received Robert W. Carey VA Trophy Award for Performance Excellence.
- Received Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence – Achievement Award.
- MHVAHCS holds a 4-Star Quality rating per newly released SAIL report and is ranked #7 in 1c facilities.
- Responsive, compassionate staff and engaged leadership.
- Patient Services Executive Board - operates as clearinghouse for customer service suggestions from other committees and forwards recommendations to the Executive Leadership Team for action.
- Service Excellence Committee – reviews customer service issues and trends and develops recommendations for improvements for Veterans.
- A redesign of the HR process has improved speed for hiring.
- Increased focus on clinic management to increase appointment capacity.
- Same day access initiatives implemented for Audiology, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Nutrition and Food Services.
- Expansion of Primary Care hours (evenings and week-ends).
- Extended work hours at Knoxville Outpatient Clinic (KOPC); facility open six days a week from 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
- Implemented Telehealth for new patient exams.
- Established a Veteran Transportation Network at KOPC and MHVAHCS.
- Standardized clinic profiles for all providers.

3. Opportunities for Improvements

- Access/wait time (outpatient).
- Effective communication/education/follow-up; VISN-wide goal to improve two-way communications with Veteran and provider/team.
- Engage/Encourage/Empower Veterans to set their own health care goals – national initiative to encourage Veterans to be vocal about their care and health care choices.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for Veterans to participate on facility committees.
- The centerpiece of the *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014*, signed into law on August 7, is a special \$10 billion Veterans Choice Fund which entitles eligible Veterans to receive a Choice Card. Over the next three years, VA

is to use the fund as needed to buy care from non-VA care providers for Veterans if they face long waits for VA care, defined initially as VA appointment date more than 30 days or if they reside more than 40 miles from VA care. The challenge has been the contract provider (TriWest Healthcare Alliance) did not initially have sufficient providers on their network contract and they are working to correct this so Veterans can receive timely care.

4. Process to Reach/Maintain Goals

- A Veterans Advisory Council (VAC) is being formed at MHVAHCS; the first meeting was scheduled for September 9, 2015.
- Feedback from Veterans/Staff, Focus Groups, Town Hall Meetings.
- Patient Satisfaction Surveys (SHEP) provides monthly feedback from Veterans.
- Service Excellence Committee, Patient Services Executive Board and Patient-Centered Care Committee meet regularly to review the needs of Veterans and make improvements to processes and programs.
- Reward/recognition for excellent customer service.
- Systems Redesign program in place to improve efficiency, quality and customer satisfaction.

Continuing Facility Improvements

1. Current Construction Updates

- CSI-331 Construct Special Procedures Room will add a new operating room in Building 200 surgical area which will increase the capacity and surgical services offered by the facility.
- 621-320 (Minor) Emergency Department Expansion is underway to build additional exam rooms and waiting room space for Emergency Department, as well as renovate existing space to improve patient flow and privacy.
- Addition of a second linear accelerator for Radiation Oncology to improve access for Veterans.
- 621-321 (Minor) Community Living Center (CLC) Expansion, Building 162, will increase space for patient activities and improve the living environment in the CLC; anticipated completion date of June 2016.
- 621-14-100 Renovate N-Side, Building 160, for Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) Phase 1 will improve space efficiency and patient flow for Primary Care PACT teamlets that are currently using old DOM 2-person bedrooms as exam rooms.
- 621-330 (Minor) Construct a 297-space Parking Garage which will provide a new parking garage at the rear of Building 160 in order to address identified parking deficiency (3 levels planned with opportunity to add 2 more levels with additional funding).
- Knoxville Outpatient Clinic (KOPC) has executed a new lease for a 2nd Annex that will house an expanded Eye Clinic and Radiology services, to include MRI service for the Knoxville area. Construction is underway and due to complete

May 2016. This will also free up space in the main KOPC, which will allow for more primary care providers in the main clinic.

2. Upcoming Construction Plans

- 621-15-118 Renovate C-Wing Ground Floor, Building 200, for Intensive Care Unit expansion will allow an expansion of the ICU area while also improving on the technology of the services offered.
- 621-14-135 Renovate Building 8 will allow consolidation of administrative services and Director's Suite in one location, which will make additional space available for Mental Health and Primary Care in Building 160.
- 621-15-119 Renovate and expand Operating Room (OR) waiting area will provide additional waiting area for surgical patients and their families, as well as improve patient privacy.
- 621-15-104 Upgrade Building 77/204 switchgear will replace the main electrical distribution system for Pharmacy, IRM, Radiology, SPS, Audiology, Dental and Lab, thereby improving the reliability of the electrical infrastructure for these services.
- Expansion of Radiology Service at MHVAHCS to include 4,300 square feet addition for replacement MRI to be located adjacent to the Radiology department.

Upcoming/Current Activities or Event

- MHVAHCS Leadership staff has scheduled a Veterans Town Hall to listen to Veterans' concerns on December 1, 2015, for the Sevierville VA Outpatient Clinic Veterans. These meetings are designed to receive feedback from Veterans, their families and congressional offices regarding Veterans' care and any concerns they have. Additionally, information is shared about the new Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014. These Veterans Town Hall meetings are held quarterly at different VA outpatient clinic locations and the medical center so that all Veterans' voices have an opportunity to be heard. A follow-up to this meeting will be provided in next quarter's report.
- MHVAHCS Director, Charlene S. Ehret, will retire on January 2, 2016 after 45 years of service. No replacement has been announced.
- MHVAHCS paid tribute to Ex-POWs at a ceremony on October 23, 2015 at the medical center.
- MHVAHCS held a Veteran's Day Program on November 9, 2015 at the medical center to honor all Veterans. Good participation by Veterans, their families, staff and the community.

Charlene S. Ehret, FACHE
Medical Center Director